

Esperanto and the UN

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Universala Esperanto-Asocio

Recent developments in Esperanto

Commerce. Internacia Komerca kaj Ekonomia Federacio, the International Commercial and Economic Federation, which uses Esperanto as its working language, has elected a new board for the period 2022-2025. President is Mr. Wang Tianyi, of China, and Secretary is Mr. Enkhee Chimedtseren of Mongolia. Additional members of the 12-member board are from Brazil, Canada, China, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Poland.

Radio: 100 Years. The March issue of the Association's journal, *Esperanto*, celebrated 100 years of Esperanto broadcasting: on June 19, 1922, the radio station WJZ in Newark, New Jersey, was the first to use Esperanto, followed by 2LO in London on December 8 of that year. Barbara Pietrzak, for many years the Esperanto voice of Polish Radio and now of Pola RetRadio, offers a rundown of the history of broadcasting in Esperanto, and she is joined by Ariadna Garcia Gutierrez and Maritza Gutiérrez of Radio Havana Cuba, and Veronika Poór of the online station Radio Muzaiko, in a general discussion of broadcasting through Esperanto – a field in which women have played a particularly notable role.

Madagascar. Other topics covered in the March issue of the journal *Esperanto* included a regular listing of new books in Esperanto, an update on this year's World Congress of Esperanto to be held in Montreal, and an interview with Henriel Fidilalao, editor of the Malagasy Esperanto journal *Panoramo de la Granda Insulo*.

European Union. Seán Ó Riain, Irish diplomat, contributing to the Conference on the Future of Europe, called for an expansion of the teaching of foreign languages in the European Union and for the teaching of Esperanto, a view supported by the Croatian Esperanto League in a recent meeting with Domagoj Hajdikovic, chair of the Office of European Affairs of the Croatian parliament. The Esperanto movement has consistently emphasized the importance of linguistic inclusion, of multilingualism as a means to achieve such inclusion at the local level, and Esperanto as an international link among languages.

Poland: Interlinguistic Studies. The international Interlinguistic Studies programme has functioned at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) in Poznan, Poland, since 1998. A new two-year Masters degree program in Interlinguistics is planned for international students, to begin in the 2022/23 academic year in the framework of the Department of Linguistics and Information Management (part of the Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures) for international students.

UNESCO Courier: Biodiversity. The latest edition of the *UNESCO Courier* to appear in Esperanto translation is concerned with the restoration of biodiversity across the world, with articles on Indigenous

peoples and the natural world, island environments, and restoration of the natural environment in Africa and elsewhere. It is not too late to act, according to the issue's leading article: "Long-term conservation measures are successfully halting the decline of some threatened species. Protected areas, which today represent seventeen per cent of the earth's surface, serve as a brake on urban and agricultural encroachment, The goal is to reach thirty per cent by 2030. But 100 per cent of humanity must be reconciled to living alongside all living beings right now." The Esperanto edition of the *Courier* is published by the Chinese International Publishing Group under the auspices of the Universal Esperanto Association, and edited by Chen Yi. In addition to the six official UNESCO languages and Esperanto, the *Courier* is published in Catalan, Korean, and Portuguese.

Sainthood for Esperanto speaker. At the first canonization ceremony in more than two and a half years, to take place on May 15, Pope Francis will proclaim Titus Brandsma a saint. Born in the Netherlands in 1881, Brandsma chose a double but complementary life – as a friar and as a journalist. A professor of the newly-founded Catholic University of Nijmegen and appointed its rector in 1932. Describing the Nazi regime as "a black lie," he sharply criticized its policies, including its anti-semitic policies. Arrested in 1942, he was imprisoned and, after years of suffering, eventually sent to Dachau concentration camp, where he died. An early enthusiast for Esperanto and its mission of peace, he was active in IKUE, the International Catholic Esperanto Union. He wrote for the Esperanto press and helped organize Esperanto meetings, including the World Esperanto Catholic Conference in The Hague in 1937.

Universal Esperanto Association marks International Women's Day with a sense of urgency: The United Nations "must do the job it was created to do."

"Gender equality is essential for a peaceful world, in which everyone can work together for a sustainable future in a spirit of solidarity," declared the Universal Esperanto Association in its message on International Women's Day, 8 March 2022. "The Universal Esperanto Association greets the United Nations and gives its support to this year's IWD theme, *Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow*."

But developments in Ukraine led the Association to focus on the situation of women in war zones, and to do so with special urgency: "This year, our solidarity is above all with those women in war zones who struggle to protect their children, who seek to defend the elderly, who volunteer to mitigate the effects of war even as war continues to rage around them." Furthermore, "they do so on the heels of COVID, which has brought sorrow to many, disrupted education, and put children at risk all across the world."

In short, "War and disease threaten everyone: it is everyone's task, men and women alike, to work peacefully to overcome such threats."

"In so many parts of the world," the message declared, "the power of language has given way to force, or is subverted to promote disorder. We salute those brave women who speak out against such destruction and who plead for the restoration of order in a world in which finally their voices must be heard and destructive forces must give way to the voices of order, of peace, and of equality."

Referring back to the IWD theme, the Association again expressed its frustration: “In seeking sustainability we seek to change the world; but today so many women across the world must work simply to sustain what is left of world order and to turn back the forces of destruction that threaten them.”

“We call on the United Nations to do the job that it was created to do, and on its member-states to make that happen.”

Esperanto “An element in the cultural heritage of humankind” says Lo Jacomo

Addressing the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November, UEA’s representative to Unesco, François Lo Jacomo, drew attention to the many years of UEA’s co-operation with UNESCO, going back to 1954. As examples of such co-operation he cited the Esperanto edition of the *UNESCO Courier*, publication of a history of UNESCO in Esperanto, and the fact that 59 volumes of classic works translated from numerous languages have been published by UEA in Esperanto. He drew attention to Esperanto’s increasing role as an inter-African language, citing examples from Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Burundi.

In short, Esperanto is “an element in the cultural heritage of humankind.”

“With our partners the International League of Esperanto Teachers and the World Esperanto Youth Organization, along with UNESCO,” Lo Jacomo added, “We are trying to build a new World Citizenship and we are actively participating in the Festival for Peace which a group of NGOs is organizing ... with Esperanto as one of the working languages.”

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